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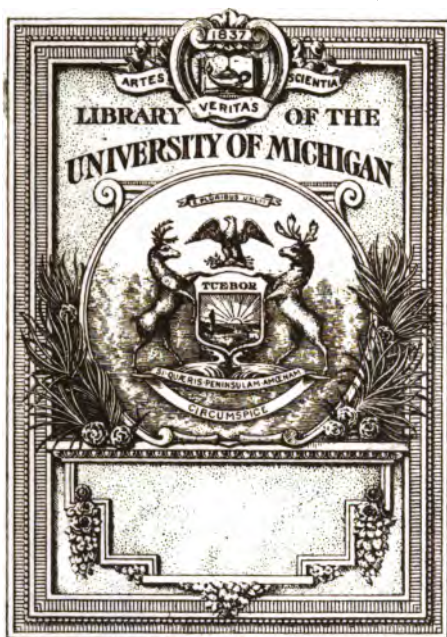
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PAUL THE PREACHER

JOHN L. ROSSER

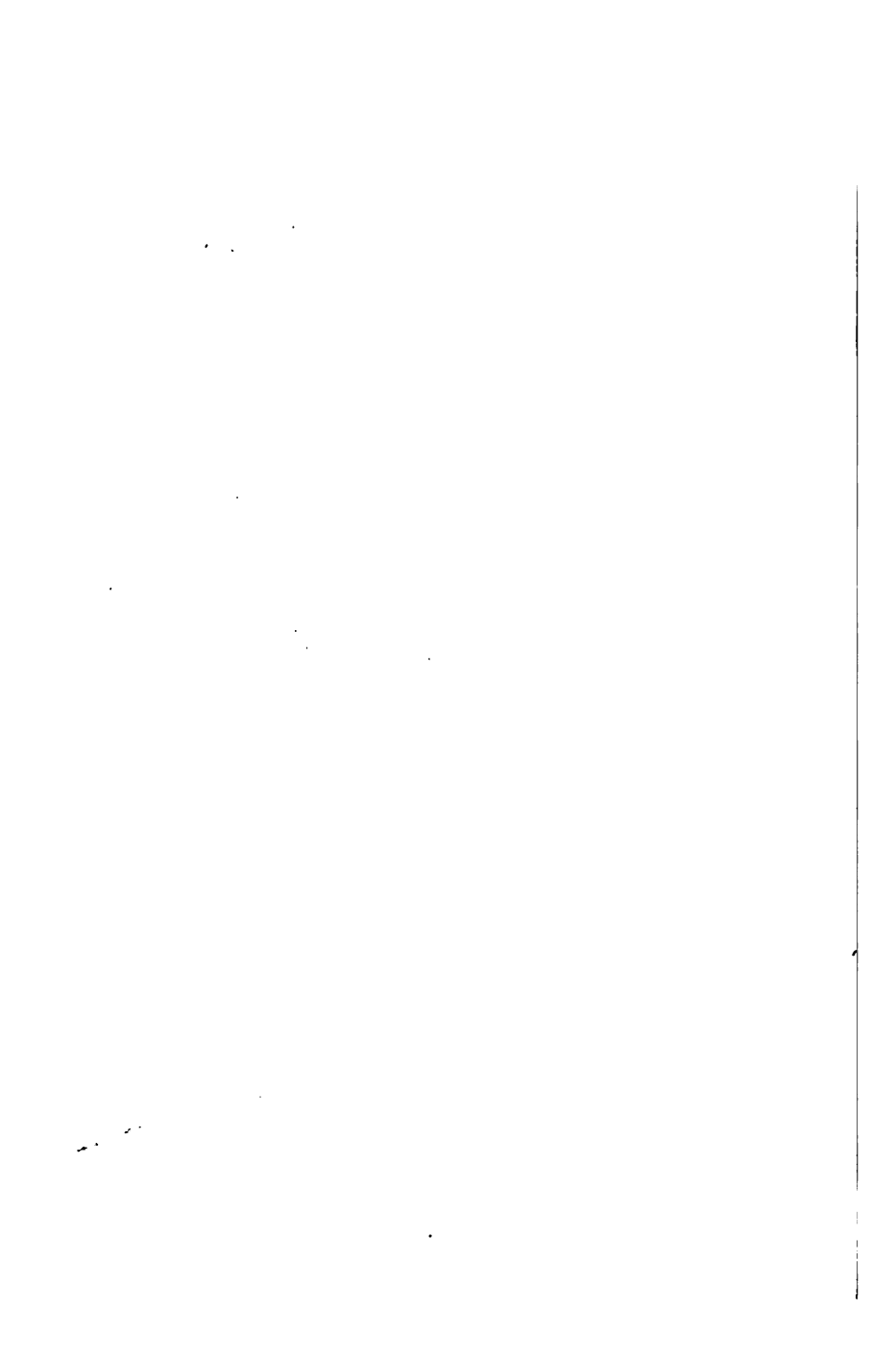


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Paul The Preacher



By

JOHN L. ^{*Leonidas*} ROSSER, A.B., Th.M.

**American Tract Society,
Park Avenue and Fortieth Street
NEW YORK.**



**AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY
PARK AVENUE AND 40TH STREET
NEW YORK**

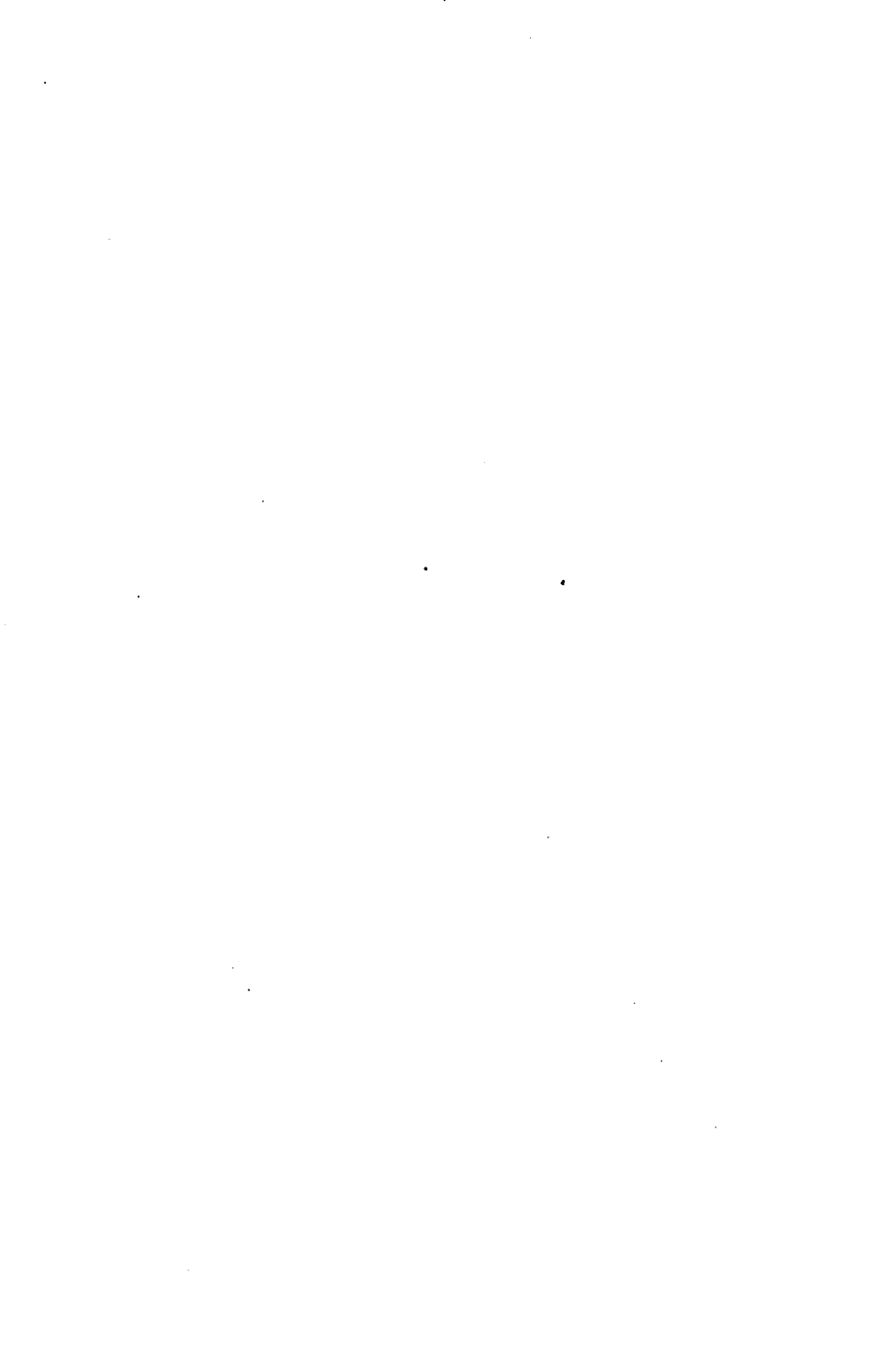


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026 Jan 17 1906

To
My Wife, Evelyn

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FOREWORD.

The author's justification for this work is a conviction that there is an open place for such a volume. Though Paul was first of all a preacher, the scattered material dealing with the homiletical phase of his life is soon exhausted. The table of contents clearly reveals the plan of the book. A sharp distinction has not in every place been observed between the man and the minister, nor has it been deemed necessary to use at all the apostle's earlier name Saul.

The quotations, with one exception, have been made from the American Standard Revised Bible. In most instances the proof-texts could have been largely increased, but the book is not intended mainly as a collation of Scriptures.

The author believes the present generation of preachers and Christian workers can learn much from the Master's greatest preacher, and cherishes the hope that this small volume may direct renewed attention to the homiletical aspect of Paul's many-sided life. The author is of course indebted to his reading in Pauline literature, but a bibliography would be so general in character as not to be of great value.

J. L. R.

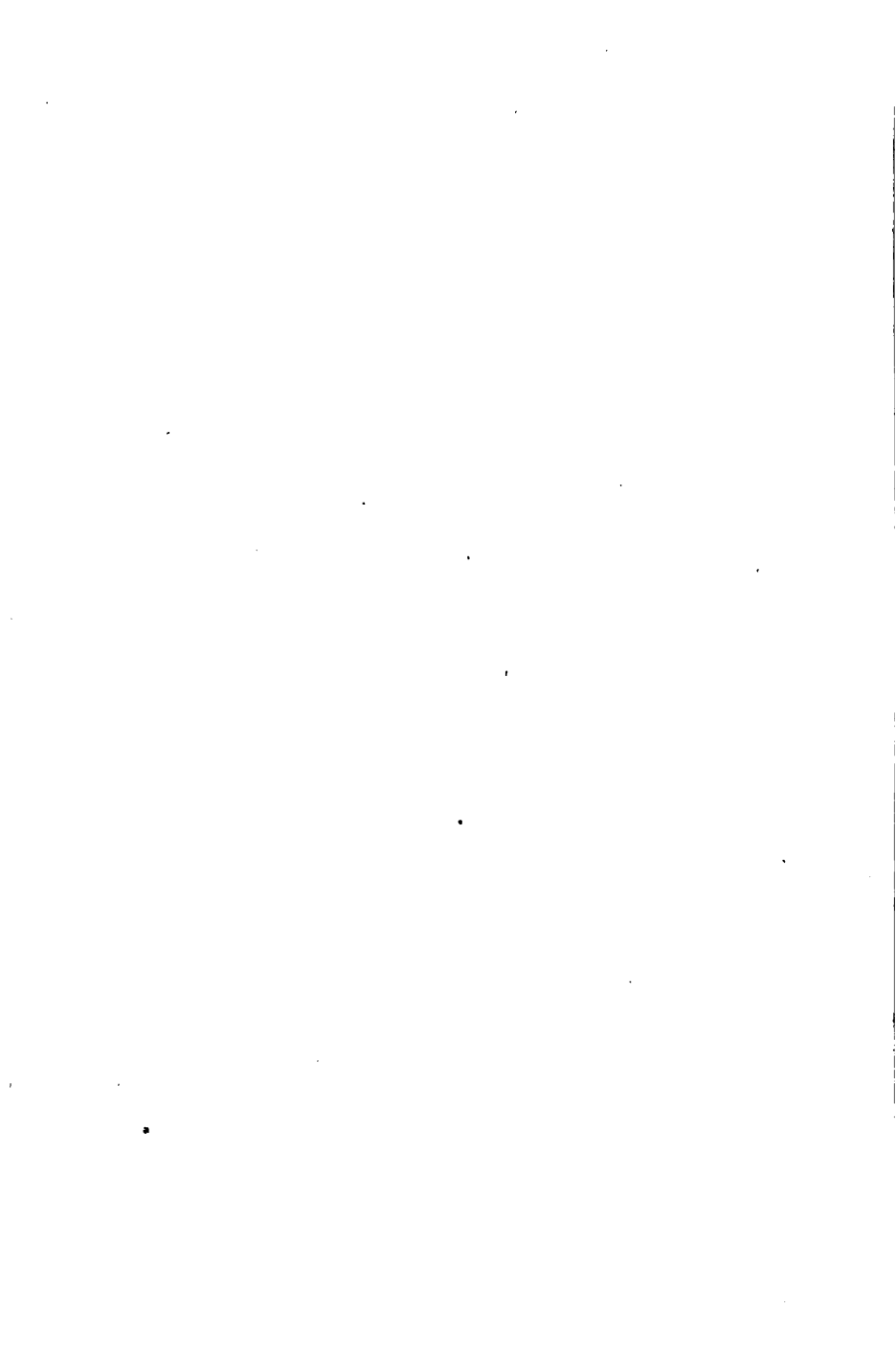
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CHAPTER I.
PREPARATION BEFORE CONVERSION.



CHAPTER I.

PREPARATION BEFORE CONVERSION.

The career of the Apostle Paul as a preacher can be understood only by taking into account the main elements of his preparation. The factors to be considered in this chapter are his gifts by nature and acquirements through education.

I.

I. When Paul says that God separated him even from his mother's womb unto a special mission, he recognizes his natural endowments as part of his preparation for his career. His physical qualifications for the work of the ministry deserve some notice. The passage of Scripture usually accepted as decisive of Paul's personal appearance is the statement of his enemies in the church at Corinth: "For his letters, they say, are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak." But when the words are considered in the light of the context, one becomes sure that Paul's personal appearance was not in the minds of his critics at all. The contrast is between the threatening tone of his letters and his mild behavior when present.

2 Cor. 10: 10.

That Paul so understood the criticism seems clear from his answer in the next verse: "Let such a one reckon this, that, what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such are we in deed when we are present." The contrast in his answer is between "word" and "deed," not word and appearance. Out of the tumult that arose over healing the cripple at Lystra, we get a suggestion that Paul was of small stature. The amazed pagans "called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker." The names respectively applied to the apostles were based on an idea deeply embedded in the religion of the people of Asia Minor. They thought of the supreme deity as sitting apart from the world, and expressing his will through a messenger or subordinate god. Jupiter was at that time the supreme deity of that section of the world, and Mercury was the servant of the gods, and also the god of eloquence. Our impressions of Barnabas are that he was of placid temperament and dignified manner. Thus seeing Paul beside the "more statuesque figure" of his companion, and acting as the chief speaker, the conclusion that he was the servant of Jupiter was natural.

2 Cor. 10: 11.

Acts 14: 12.

There is extant an incomplete romance entitled *Acts of Paul*. This work was composed

by an Asian presbyter about the middle of the second century. Sir William Ramsay thinks it embodies a tradition brought forward from the first century. In an episode there dealing with Paul and Thekla, the former is described as a "man small in size, bald, bow-legged, sturdy, with eyebrows meeting, nose prominent." The description was most probably based on local memories, and reasoning from the character of the composition, we judge that such a description would not have been given unless the facts required it.

Paul has also considerable place in early art. Representations appear on the gilded glasses and sepulchral slabs of the catacombs, on the sarcophagi, and the mosaics of the basilicas. There is a prevailing type. The apostle is represented as short in stature, a little bowed, with bald forehead, beard long and pointed, face oval, nose long and straight, countenance strong and delicate.

Our survey thus leads to the conclusion that Paul was lacking in the commanding appearance of the conventional orator.

2. Paul had qualities of great physical endurance. The bare record of his activities in travelling, preaching, writing, and working for self-support is alone convincing as to that fact. His were crowded years. A vision of many

miles travelled and vast work done rises before the mind out of the single statement: "From Jerusalem, and round about even to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ," and that summary is only partial. "Working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." **Rom. 15: 19.** Many similar passages occur. The cruelties suffered at the hands of enemies drew heavily upon his physical energies. It is to be remembered that the long catalogue of shameful treatments and hardships which he has set down includes only what had befallen him in the first half of his career. Yet he lived to become "Paul the aged." He had the will, and in spite of his sensitive and high-strung organization, the capacity to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. **1 Thess. 2: 9. Acts 20: 34.**

3. "It would appear," says Dr. James Stalker, "that he lacked the rotund voice." The finest vocal gifts are not always characteristic of men with the keen, analytic, philosophical, system-building intellect. But Paul's ability to engage attention and, under normal circumstances, to hold the attention of any audience is decisive against a severely unfavorable judgment as to his vocal equipment. **1 Cor. 11: 23-27. Philemon 9.**

II.

It would be logical to consider next Paul's natural mental endowments, but as the character of his gifts in that sphere will be illustrated in another part of this volume, it would involve repetition to discuss them at this point. We pass to the consideration of his preparation through the education he received.

Acts 22: 6. 1. The Jewish contribution to Paul's education is primary both in time and importance. This began at home. His parents were Pharisees, strict constructionists of Judaism, sleepless guardians of the inherited faith. They regarded themselves as "intrusted with the oracles of God," certainly for their own household, and under solemn obligations to observe the Mosaic rule for training children. At three years of age Scripture verses, benedictions, and wise sayings were given to be memorized. At five years the Hebrew Bible was taken up, commencing with Leviticus. When about six years old the boy was sent to a school attached to the synagogue and conducted by a Rabbi. The Scriptures were the text-book, and judging from his quotation of the Septuagint in after-years, even where it diverges from the Hebrew, it seems clear that the Greek translation was used. That period of study in his native city

Deut. 6: 6, 7.

was of great importance in Paul's educational development. The years covered correspond to the junior period in our modern Sunday schools, and verbal memory is then at its height. The facility with which he in later years supported his positions by quotation of, and allusion to, the Old Testament must be attributed in no small measure to the knowledge gained in that time. When he afterwards wrote "that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings" he was recording his own as well as Timothy's experience.

2 Tim. 3: 15.

Manual labor was, in theory at least, highly honored by the Jews. Among the noted Rabbis was found every variety of trade. So according to Jewish custom that every boy have a trade, Paul was taught tent-making. This industrial feature of his education was of double value. It created sympathy with common life. The day was coming when he would need to know the point of view of the artisans as well as that of the scholars of the world. His practice of self-support at times was an effective answer to those "false apostles, deceitful workers," who charged him with preaching the gospel for gain.

Acts 18: 3.

1 Cor. 9: 12.

2. Paul was designed for a Rabbi. So at twelve or thirteen years of age, he was sent to Jerusalem, to continue his studies under the

great teachers in the Scribal College, located within the Temple precincts, probably in the synagogue of the Temple. The material of instruction here was the Hebrew Scriptures, supplemented by numerous commentaries. The teacher occupied a slightly raised dais, the students sitting around in a circle on the floor. The periods of instruction were enlivened by the custom of allowing the students to ask questions, a method much practiced in modern classes.

It was one of Paul's cherished privileges and memories that he had been taught by the learned and revered Gamaliel, "a doctor of the law, had in honor of all the people." "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel." This teacher was the most distinguished representative of the school of Hillel, which was far more popular, liberal, and influential than the school of Schammai. The influence of such a personality upon so receptive a student as Paul was profound and permanent. Dr. Howson states the effects as most probably three-fold: candor and honesty of judgment, a willingness to study and make use of Greek authors, and a keen and watchful enthusiasm for the Jewish law. If this is a true estimate, a little rift had been made through which Paul might innocently

Acts 5: 24.

Acts 22: 3.

glimpse some values outside of the peculiar privileges of his race. Seeds of principle and disposition were implanted which flowered later into the greatest value to him as the Apostle to the Gentiles. Perhaps there is an echo of the satisfactory progress of the Jerusalem days in his later statement: "I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen."

Gal. 1: 14.

III.

In its derivation the word education means "to draw out." So whatever works to that end has a right to be reckoned as an educational agency. There were some factors contributing to Paul's mental life that can be characterized neither as Jewish nor Gentile, yet were significant in his preparation to preach.

I. Observation contributes to one's education. Eye-gate admits more visitors into the chambers of the mind than ear-gate. The natural scenery in and around Tarsus was mingled of the gentle and the grand. Plain and river, sea, hill and mountain were features of the outlook; but judging from the use made of acquired material, external nature gave no large contribution to Paul's mental stores. His references are usually brief, his only elaborate illustration from nature being the grafting proc-

Rom. 11: 24.

ess, which has been adduced as proof that Paul was inaccurate in observation of nature. The charge is unjust. He says it is "contrary to nature," nor was the illustration intended to apply in all particulars. Paul had a poetic side to his personality, but he had little of a poet's quiet delight in the operations of the natural world. He was not charmed and exalted by its manifestations. He was not primarily of that brooding temperament which feels that

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes
By the deep sea, and music in its roar."

Of Paul's observation of human activities there is more to say. Tarsus had a large population, and was queen of the Cilician plain. The future apostle often looked upon busy scenes along the lake-harbor, the Cydnus, and other places in the city. The multitude that lived in and visited Tarsus, with their varied activities, characters, and temperaments, did not escape Paul's alert mind. Impressions as to the crude and cultured were ripened by reflection into a wisdom that, in later years, revealed itself in a tact and an adaptability to all people unequaled by any other worker in the kingdom.

Tarsus had its Greek games on the banks of

the Cydnus, and the frequency and accuracy with which Paul refers to almost every feature of these sports indicate that, strict Pharisee though he was, he was allowed to attend. "Even so run; that ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. . . . I therefore so run, as not uncertainly." Heroic qualities were in evidence, and the strenuous energies seen in action were to one of Paul's nature a stimulant.

1 Cor. 9:1
26.

2. A quick intelligence absorbs many ideas. By reason of the location, history, politics, and mixed population of the city, the atmosphere of Tarsus was impregnated with certain distinct conditions. There was a spirit of city pride. It was a Greek rather than a Semitic idea, and due to the fact that Tarsus was largely Hellenized, and also to the inheritance of a record of noble achievements by which her ancient citizens had laid the foundations of the city's greatness. Paul had absorbed the sentiment, and there is a subdued note of pride in his words to the chief captain in Jerusalem: "I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city."

Acts 21:39.

Through the gigantic barrier of the Taurus mountains runs a famous pass known as the Cilician Gates, though the Gates proper are a narrow gorge towards the southern end. With this thoroughfare was connected much inspiring

local and general history. At an unrecorded date the Tarsians, surmounting stupendous obstacles, had built a wagon road from their city to the entrance of the Gates. The way itself was historic ground; mighty conquerors had often marched their armies through the pass. The stirring events associated with it were common tradition in Tarsus.

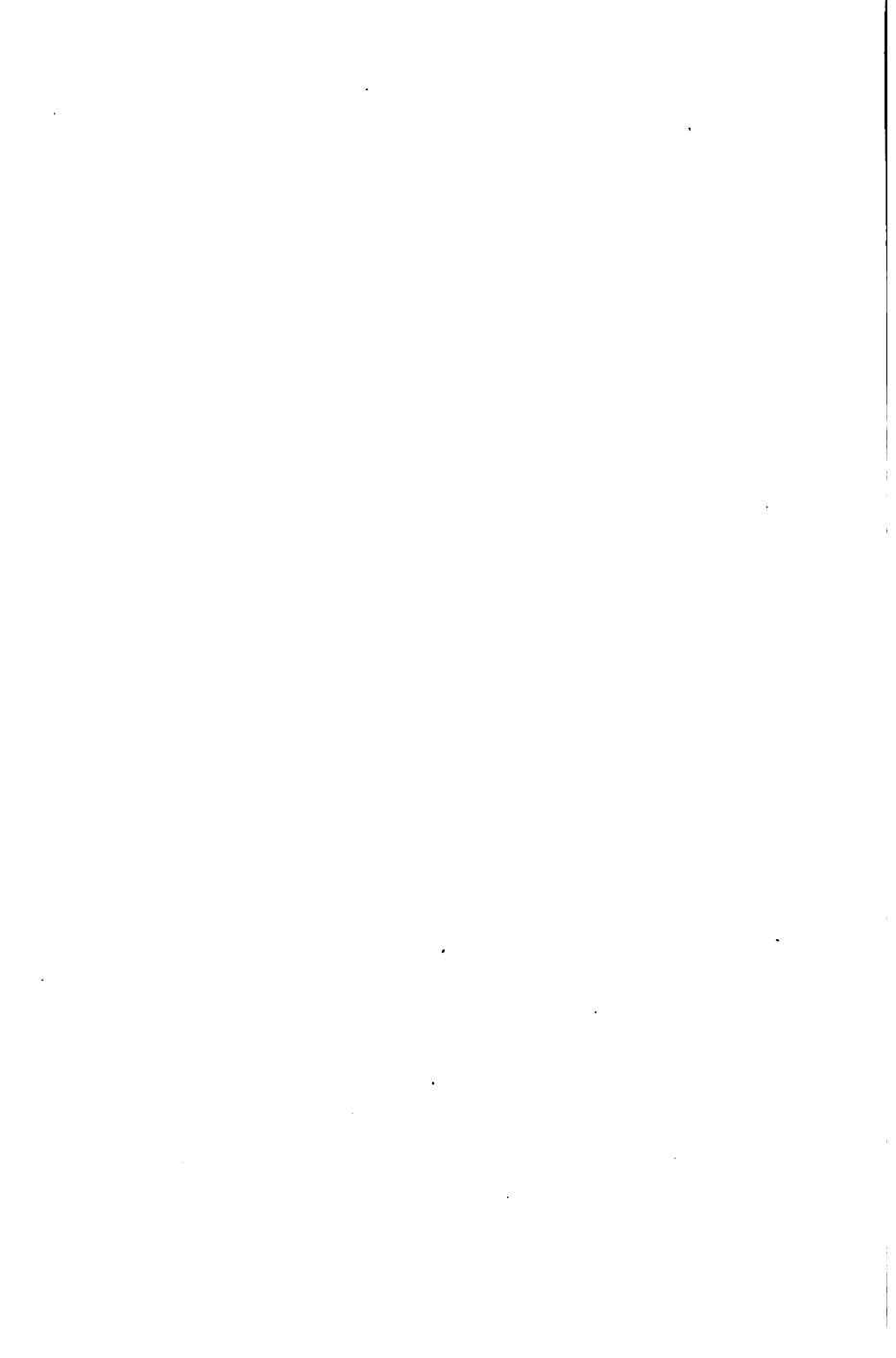
Paul was by nature "battle-mooded"; and such stern history inevitably made its appeal to his imagination, and helped to create and develop the heroic spirit so notably characteristic of the man. His native city was part of the Roman Empire, and Paul himself "a Roman born." The fact of the Empire was in the air as something vast and admirable in its physical proportions. The mind rises to a broader horizon in the contemplation of anything immense. As a Roman citizen, conscious of a membership in a world-wide system of law and order which overrode local and racial differences, he could realize the idea of a universal religious franchise, with a law and order of its own. However greatly Paul abhorred most of the features of its life, the very presence of the imperial system was an educative means by process of absorption, affording a vast concept which he was later to fill with an evangelical content.

IV.

1. It is reasonable to believe that Paul returned to his native city, when he had completed his studies in Jerusalem; and it is generally agreed that during the years between his return and his conversion he learned much in the beliefs and habits of the Gentiles. Our opinion is that he formally studied Greek philosophy. He had a naturally broad and inquiring mind. He now had the example of his famous teacher Gamaliel, who is known to have been friendly to Greek learning. Great freedom characterized the life of the University of Tarsus. Teachers were free to lecture and students to attend at will. Ideas that appear in Paul's later thinking are characteristically Greek. The sentiment of city pride has been referred to. To the Greek "his city, not his country as a whole, was his 'fatherland,'" says Dr. Ramsay. The Hebrew system was oracular, not rationalistic at all; but Paul's view of things is philosophic, which is a Greek quality of mind. Stoical terms and ideas are traceable in the apostle's writings. The University of Tarsus was noted for its emphasis on philosophy of the Stoic type.

2. If the Greek qualities observable in Paul are not thought to have required formal instruc-

tion, one may, in a way, account for them on another theory. Great freedom was granted to independent teachers. "A lecturer," says Dr. Ramsay, "was permitted to enter any city as a wandering scholar, and might begin publicly to dispute and to lecture, if he could attract an audience." Paul may have often stood before such a teacher, and his ready intellect gathered up ideas that appealed to him, or terms which he afterwards used as vessels for the truths of revelation. But on the whole the Hellenic quality in his thinking is too ingrained and the point of view too fundamental to be accounted for adequately on so slender a basis. Minds, like the dyer's hand, are subdued only to what they work in.



CHAPTER II.
PREPARATION BY AND AFTER,
CONVERSION.



CHAPTER II.

PREPARATION BY AND AFTER CONVERSION.

Paul's preparation to preach, by nature and education, contained no Christian elements, and from the human point of view had no reference to the Christian ministry. But the facts to be set forth in this chapter are related to that vocation.

I.

The supreme epoch of Paul's life was his conversion. It was the dividing ridge between his old and his new experiences. If the word "consciously" be omitted, his conversion answers well to Professor William James' description of that change as a process "by which a self hitherto divided and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy."

I. His conversion made him a Christian both in belief and spiritual experience. Whether or not Paul had personal knowledge of Jesus before this date, we are not informed; but what he thought of the Nazarene's claims is evidenced by his behavior towards the disciples: "Beyond

measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it." But the vision on the Damascus road reversed his conviction as to the person of Jesus. He saw the risen Lord. He passed out of the twilight shadows of Judaism into the clear morning of the new truth. "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more." He was convinced that the historical Jesus was the promised Messiah; for "straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God . . . proving that this is the Christ." And over the sunny field of that faith no cloud of doubt ever drifted. Absolute mental acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah was basic in Paul's preparation for preaching the gospel. And Paul was also inwardly changed. He was regenerated as well as convinced. He describes the inner phase of his conversion as a birth, although abortive. "Last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also." What Jesus had called a new birth Paul calls a new creation. He is generalizing his own experience in declaring that "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." He was created anew in Christ Jesus. God had revealed his Son in Paul as well as to him.

Acts 26: 11.

Acts 26: 19.

2 Cor. 5: 16.

Acts 9: 20, 22.

1 Cor. 15: 8.

2 Cor. 5: 17.

Gal. 1: 16.

2. A revolutionary change had been wrought in Paul, but carnal ordinances had no part in the

Acts 22: 16.

Acts 9: 17.

Acts 26: 16.

2 Cor. 5: 21.

transaction. His sins were washed away, the Holy Spirit had been received, and he had been appointed a minister and witness for Christ. He thus found the problem of his acceptance with God solved on another principle. He learned that righteousness was not to be attained by obedience to manifold moral and ceremonial precepts; but "him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." "How quickly or how slowly these elements of the Christian salvation were clearly and fully disclosed to him," says Dr. A. E. Garvie, "we cannot discover; but all were implicit in his conversion."

Rom. 10: 4.

The central truth to the propagation of which Paul devoted the rest of his life was that "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." The grace wherein he now stood was by faith in the Messiah who had appeared to him in the way. He had the principle and it was grounded in personal experience. "It is impossible to escape the conclusion," to quote from Dr. Garvie again, "that the significance and the value of the Cross became clear to him almost simultaneously with the certainty of the resurrection and of the Messiahship of Jesus." Later reflection brought out many details, but the germ of Paul's

favorite doctrine of justification by faith was revealed to him in his conversion.

3. Paul's tremendous conversion gave him unreserved confidence in the saving power of Christ. His own case was his norm-illustration: "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

1 Tim. 1: 15.

He regarded himself as an object lesson in grace, a strategic example in vindication of the efficacy of the gospel: "I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all his long-suffering, for an example of them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life."

1 Tim. 1: 16.

His testimony in this matter is laid upon the background of those days when he was a "blasphemer and a persecutor." At times he vindicates himself upon the ground of conscientiousness, but a deeper look soon hurries him into thoughts of shame and regret. As later he reflects upon his own conversion, it was an easy inference, that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

1 Tim. 1: 13.

Out of experience Paul was able to declare that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The mode of his conversion, when generalized, led logically to the confidence that where sin abounded grace through faith would more exceedingly abound.

Rom. 10: 13.

Rom. 1: 16.

II.

Not every educated and truly converted man is prepared to preach. "I hold with profound conviction," says Dr. J. H. Jowett, "that before a man selects the Christian ministry as his vocation he must have the assurance that the selection is imperatively constrained by the eternal God." That is a true saying.

Jer. 23: 21.

1. Paul's Jewish learning prepared him to believe in a direct call to the ministry. The stories of Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and other prophets were familiar historical illustrations of the principle. And instances of false prophets would come readily to mind. What the author of Hebrews says as to the high priest's office Paul fully accepted: "No man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God."

Heb. 5: 4.

Acts 26: 15, 16.

2. Nothing is clearer from the New Testament records than that Paul did receive a divine call to the ministry. He heard the call first from the lips of Jesus himself: "And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet; for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness." After the three days of fasting and blindness in Damascus, and under calmer circumstances, the call was repeated by Jesus through Ananias who said to Paul: "The

God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will and . . . thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.” And in his own writings he constantly asserts the divine origin of his call. “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.” “Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God.” “I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle.”

Acts 22: 14, 15.

Rom. 1: 1.

1 Cor. 1: 1.

2 Tim. 1: 11.

Paul thought always of his ministry as a gift of grace. “I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given unto me according to the working of his power. Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” And Paul’s conception of his office was magnified when he later realized that his ministry had been allowed for in the divine scheme: “God, who separated me, even from my mother’s womb, and called me through his grace.” He was not an incidental conscript, substituted at the eleventh hour for some one who, like Judas, had fallen away; but his life was a factor included in God’s original plan for getting the gospel preached in the world. Thus was Paul prepared to preach by a personal call into the ministry. He had seen his burning bush; he knew the voice heard

Eph. 3: 7, 8.

Gal. 1: 15.

therefrom was Jehovah's; and henceforth he walked on holy ground.

III.

Another factor in Paul's preparation to preach was added when he was given a message. We are not concerned at this point to analyze his gospel, nor to attempt to date his reception of it; but only to note that he proclaimed a divinely revealed message. To think that he was deluded in the matter creates a greater problem than it solves. "Let a man so account of us as . . . stewards of the mysteries of God," who "committed unto us the word of reconciliation." A steward is manager of affairs committed to him. "I delivered unto you first of all that which I received." In his letter to the Galatians, Paul, for obvious reasons, states directly how he came into possession of the word of truth: "For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." Thus the already enlisted soldier of the Cross was given his weapon: "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

1 Cor. 4: 11.

2 Cor. 5: 9.

1 Cor. 15: 3.

1 Cor. 11: 23.

Gal. 1: 11, 12.

IV.

Paul's ministry at Damascus, following his baptism and reception by the disciples there, though powerful, was at most incidental. So we pass that by to note his retirement into Arabia. Place must be allowed in Acts for the additional information in Galatians: "I went away into Arabia." How far he went, who went with him, and who visited him, are profitless questions. There was danger in his remaining in Damascus, and this was a minor cause of his leaving. But that does not alter the fact, that this season of retirement was a significant providential feature of Paul's preparation for his career.

Acts 9: 20-22.

Gal. 1: 17.

Acts 9: 23, 25.

I. There was personal need for a season of meditation. Paul needed to win his own soul. He had been violently wrested from his ancient standing, turned suddenly right about face. "Believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets," and also Gamaliel's theology, neither could he doubt his recent vision and experience. But the new and the old did not harmonize. Counter currents were running in his understanding. Surely God was "dispensationally consistent." The fresh knowledge must flow with the truth already revealed.

Acts 24: 14.

Acts 22: 21.

2. Paul had a call to preach to the heathen world. It may be doubted nevertheless whether he felt free to offer the gospel to the Gentiles, apart from Jewish ceremonies. The manner of his own conversion generalized led to faith as the universally valid method of salvation; but it is not easy for a strong nature to free itself at once from restraints under which all past life has been lived. But sequestered there in the ancestral home of his race, continued prayerful meditation, with perhaps additional revelations, brought order out of mental chaos. The warring factions of his soul were summoned before the high court of reflection, and their differences arbitrated. He attained a firm and full grasp of the gospel's essential nature and terms of its reception. The foundations of the orderly system of truth which Paul preached the rest of his life were laid during that season of retirement in Arabia.



CHAPTER III.
PAUL'S INTELLECTUAL QUALITIES.



CHAPTER III.

PAUL'S INTELLECTUAL QUALITIES.

Paul being a finely trained as well as richly gifted man, we expect distinction in his intellectual work. The treatment in this chapter includes only those faculties which are brought mostly into use in the work of preaching.

I.

1. Paul made frequent use in his sermons of notable experiences of his past life. His use of memory in this way is most conspicuous in regard to his persecution of the Christians. Five times he recalls his deplorable zeal in that direction, and refers once to his complicity in the martyrdom of Stephen. The light that came to him in the face of Jesus Christ threw that sorrowful activity into dark relief, and the memories of those misguided days, like tall trees at even-tide, threw their shadows clear across his life's landscape. Paul never needlessly obtrudes the regrettable features of his former life, for "he was not a man to dwell with pride upon his past sins and failings"; but when, in his opinion, it served some worthy end to do so, he neither hesitated nor apologized for such

Acts 22: 20.

personal references. The memory of that unfortunate period was painful and humiliating, but in his own life it brought forth the lovely fruit of a humble and contrite spirit, and magnified before men the boundless mercy of God. **1 Tim. 1: 15, 16.**
1 Cor. 15: 9.

2. In his speech from the castle steps in Jerusalem, and in his defence before Agrippa, Paul recalled at some length the events that culminated in his conversion, which epoch was led up to by a rapid sketch of his previous life. The sequence of facts adduced constituted a powerful plea for an attitude of sober judgment toward himself. They adequately accounted for his change of faith and allegiance, and were a strong argument in support of the Messianic claims of Jesus: "I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." **Acts 22: 6-8.**
Acts 26: 12-15.
Acts 22: 8.

The autobiographical facts stated by Paul constitute, it is true, an argument from experience, but as memory is the faculty in immediate exercise they are set down under this division.

II.

1. Paul's imagination was not the least of his intellectual gifts. There is no lack of imagery in his writings. He drew upon many sources for rhetorical figures. Simile and metaphor abound, with much use of the single-word

metaphor. His imagination does not, as a rule, construct highly artistic or idealized pictures, but warms the mass of his thought, which then yields itself to the purposes in hand. But at least two of Paul's longer productions are exceptions to this general characterization of his imagination. We agree with Dr. John A. Broadus that, in at least one instance, Paul produced "without apparent effort a gem of literary beauty not surpassed in all the world's literature, that eulogium upon love, which blazes like a diamond on the bosom of Scripture." And another writer has said: "Were his Epistles a ring of gold set with many diamonds, this chapter would be the center stone of purest water, a diamond of many facets." The thought is elevated, and the lyric quality and movement are sustained to the end. To linger in praise of that piece of work would be carrying coals to Newcastle. The other long selection of high literary rank is from the same Epistle. This is primarily an argument by analogy, and is to be considered as such in another place, but the profound thought is kindled and its outlines are softened and adorned by the creations of a flexible and affluent imagination.

2. The most of Paul's composition that shows the touch of imagination's beauty consists of

1 Cor. 13.

1 Cor. 15: 38f.

brief passages scattered about like nuggets in the gold-bearing regions. "Every now and then," says Dr. Stalker, "his thought bursts up through the argument like a flaming geyser and falls in showers of sparks," and "these outbursts are the finest passages in St. Paul." We meet with an image expressive and of delicate beauty in his address at Athens: "That they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." The figure is that of a person groping in the dark among the strings of an instrument till the satisfying note be found. There is fine vision and beautiful and vivid expression in the words: "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand." There is a picturesque charm in Paul's description of the preacher: "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" Afar we see the herald hastening across the mountains with a joyous message to Zion. The passage is a quotation, but ability to appreciate the beautiful is of the same kind as that which creates it. The verse in which Paul contrasts our transitory life with the abiding home of the redeemed contains moving eloquence, a spirit that gladdens great oratory: "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with

Acts 17: 27.

Rom. 13: 12.

Rom. 10: 15.

2 Cor. 5: 1.

hands, eternal in the heavens." The apostle's swan-song would, apart from being Scripture, endure on its literary merits: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

2 Tim. 4: 7.

The blended effect of a backward and forward look mightily moved his soul, and a tide of thought and emotion flowed into expressions that belong on the high levels. The passage combines the beauty of solemn reflection, harmony of thought and language, moral sublimity, and subduing pathos, and would have been impossible apart from a strong and chastened imagination. The examples quoted well illustrate the quality of Paul's artistic imagination. He was perhaps constrained to directness and simplicity by principle. It did not seem fitting to clothe the truth in too much of the popular elegance and so-called "excellency of speech."

1 Cor. 2: 1.

III.

Paul's was a many-sided intellect, but reason was supreme. It was the Colossus that bestrode his intellectual world. Paul's general policy of becoming all things to all men, that he might by all means save some, is aptly illustrated in his methods of reasoning with different

1 Cor. 9: 22.

races. To Jews and their sympathizers he appealed to the Scriptures, which with them, as with us, was a technical term, denoting certain writings — “the oracles of God” — whose word was authoritative. His approach to his countrymen is revealed in Luke’s account of his work at Thessalonica where “Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ,” and his first reported missionary sermon, the one in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch, was of the same character. At Corinth “he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks,” and at Ephesus “he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.” And the substance of his message on all these occasions was “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” When he wished to turn the hopes of the Jews from law to grace, he said: “What saith the Scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.” Paul sought to persuade the Jews from their own Scriptures of

Rom. 3: 2.

Acts 17: 2, 3.

Acts 13: 17-40.

Acts 18: 4.

Acts 18: 19.

1 Cor. 15: 3, 4.

Rom. 4: 3.

four things: the Messiahship, the vicarious death, the resurrection of Jesus, and faith as the means of salvation.

God had a message through Paul for the pagans of Lystra, but inspired penmen had not put it into books. So in seeking to convince them of the existence of the true and living God, Paul pointed them to the rains and fruitful seasons from heaven. A great man can be most elementary. Dr. Ramsay thinks that Paul, having lived in Tarsus, knew prior to this visit something of the character of the Lystrans. Paul was not bent on showing his learning that day. He could get no farther back than the simple truths of natural religion, from which he reasoned to the superstitious multitude there. The apostle must adopt yet another form of reasoning as his only hope of winning the Greeks.

The Hellenic mind worked along evolutionary lines; there were stages by which things came to be as they are. Being now in Athens, the intellectual capital of the world, and knowing from contact with its thought in Tarsus the road by which, if at all, the Greeks could be led to a conviction, Paul cast the truth into philosophic form. The one God, Creator of the world and Author of life, "made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the

Acts 14: 17.

earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation.” He Acts 17: 26.
had not created all the present order just out of hand, but with him as First Cause and upholding and governing Presence, it had developed. This conception would greatly please the philosophic Greeks, but its logic discredited their polytheism and undermined their racial pride and conceit. Paul was surpassingly skilful here. “Each word in the address is adapted at once to win and to rebuke.” The theory of one living God acting in a providential manner destroyed the Epicurean theory of blind chance, as a personal Governor it ruled out the Stoic’s doctrine of pantheism, as spiritual it rebuked the idolatry of the populace.

Paul’s logic assumes, at different times, most of the accepted forms. He was beset with enemies and errors of many kinds, and a variety of weapons and corrections was required. Some of his arguments fall easily into syllogisms, though the propositions are not formally stated. His proof that sin is universal may be set forth as follows:

- Failure to keep the divine law is sinful;
- Jews and Gentiles failed to keep the law;
- Hence, Jews and Gentiles are both sinful.

Rom. 1: 21.
Rom. 3: 9.

Taking the conclusion of that syllogism as the

major premise of a new one, we may carry the argument further:

Rom. 2: 22, 23.
Rom. 2: 30.

Jews and Gentiles are alike sinners;
Faith is God's only means of salvation;
Hence Jews and Gentiles must be saved by
faith.

In his speech on Mars Hill, Paul's argument for the spirituality of God is deductive also:

Acts 17: 22, 29.

Source and offspring are alike in nature;
We are not like unto graven images;
Hence, God is not like unto such things.

Rom. 5: 10.

The *a fortiori*—from the less to the greater—method of reasoning was in much favor with Paul. The principle in that form is, that since something has been found true in a less probable instance, it will surely be found true in a more probable one; as, for example, "if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." Three other examples occur in the same chapter. By the same method of reasoning Paul shows his right to support for preaching the gospel: "If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more?" In some cases this same argument is not formally stated or is slightly concealed in the expression. Paul gives us a fine example of his ability in refutation. The Corinthians

1 Cor. 9: 12.

1 Cor. 9: 25.
1 Tim. 4: 8.

professed loyalty to Christ, but some of them at least were sceptical about the resurrection. The apostle reduces their position to absurdity by showing that belief in Christ carries with it the doctrine of the resurrection. Assuming that his reasoning satisfied them as to the fact of resurrection, another inquiry arises: "How are the dead raised up? and with what manner of body do they come?" This question, whether actual or anticipated, gives occasion for Paul's most elaborate argument by analogy. This method does not prove anything; but it has great defensive and inferential value, and it is in the latter sense that he uses it. Paul sets forth at length the differing facts of nature, and the transforming effects produced in given cases by natural processes, and then says: "So also is the resurrection from the dead."

1 Cor. 15: 12-19.

1 Cor. 15: 35-42.

The masterpiece of Paul's reasoning is the first part of his Epistle to the Romans. The argument there has grasp, depth, and conclusiveness. It is referred to and numbered separately here because of its general and inclusive character. There are arguments within one great argument. It is to Jew and Gentile; it contains all the kinds of proof that Paul uses in appealing to special races and classes. With God as his fundamental postulate, the apostle wrote out his philosophy of history and of re-

ligion. He views the record of human life from the moral standpoint. Mankind had a knowledge of God: a knowledge of his being, "for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity;" a knowledge of his will through the "law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them." The Jews had the further advantage of the oracles of God. The Gentiles had reached indescribable degradation, and the Jews had also failed of righteousness. There is no distinction; all have sinned, and fallen short of divine requirements. The appalling situation calls for God's intervention, that salvation may be secured on some other basis than law. God answered the imperative need by manifesting a "righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe . . . being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Paul then shows the harmony of his conclusion with God's covenant with Abraham, answers antinomianism, and closes the eighth chapter with a shout of triumph. In writing this Epistle Paul's thought was face to face with Rome, the center of a great unity, the Empire. Would not such

Rom. 1: 20.

Rom. 2: 2.

Rom. 1: 22-27.

Rom. 3: 23.

Rom. 3: 20.

an inclusive spiritual scheme appeal to citizens of that vast system? The great unity with which they were familiar had a counterpart in God's uniform principle of salvation.

IV.

It is evident that in the sum of his intellectual gifts Paul was easily first among the inspired writers. Preachers sometimes apologize for personal references. Paul freely made use of such material, good or bad, if it would serve the purpose in hand. His imagination lay somewhat in the background; but when moral impulse warmed his being, imagination often took the intellectual throne. The exquisite play of this faculty in love's hymn is thus explained. When he comes to the "most excellent way," the kindled imagination created that piece of jewelry in words. His finest imaginative strains are blossoms out of the vitality of the thought he is developing. Where one's work has to do with permanent records a "man's stature is estimated sooner or later by his mastery of logic." Next to his Master Paul has been the largest factor in Christianity, and this has been due in large measure to the range and quality of his reason. There is a flexibility and adaptability in its exercise that is for our admiration and inspiration. 1 Cor. 12.

CHAPTER IV.
PAUL'S EMOTIONAL QUALITIES.



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Intellectually gifted as he was, Paul was much more than an "animated syllogism." Some students have fixed upon his emotion as the distinctive quality of his character. He was indeed "fervent in spirit," but it is not necessary to exalt unduly that factor of his being in order to give it proper recognition. The term emotion includes many psychological elements, but our present interest is in that part of the affections which, in our nomenclature, is called love.

I.

1 Cor. 4: 17.

2 Tim. 1: 2.

2 Tim. 4: 9.
Col. 4: 14.

Paul's warmth of nature is revealed in his relations to personal friends. He refers to Timothy as "my beloved and faithful child," and later addresses a letter to this young friend as "my beloved child." And when alone in Rome, save for Luke, Paul yearns for Timothy's presence: "Give diligence to come shortly unto me." Paul met Luke, the beloved physician, first at Troas, won him to Christ, loved and leaned upon him to the end. His exquisite note to Philemon palpitates with heart-warmth towards both master and slave. His numerous

salutations at the close of his letters are not only the courtesies of a gentleman, but the disclosures of a loving soul. There is a delicate quality in the words: "Salute Rufus the chosen in the Lord, and his mother *and mine*." Paul Rom. 16: 13. was not a Stoic who, "under the bludgeonings of chance," could boast:

"I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul."

"When I came to Troas . . . I had no relief for my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother." 2 Cor. 2: 13. The presence of friends revived and gave vigor to his languishing spirits. "There is," says Dr. Stalker, "no more conclusive proof of the depth and sincerity of Paul's heart than the affection he inspired in others; for it is only the loving who are loved." Many there were who waited ready to do his bidding, whether in serving him or promoting the gospel. The Galatians would have plucked out their eyes for him. The basis of this was not admiration, but love responding to love. People loved Paul because he first loved them.

II.

The most sustained exhibition of Paul's feelings was given in his address to the elders of Ephesus, a group of preachers who came forty

- Acts 20: 22.** miles to see him. The occasion in itself is a tribute to Paul's unselfish love for the elders and the other members of the church; for he was hastening that he might, if possible, be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. The whole address palpitates with emotion. The deeps of his soul are broken up, and his language is tense with the strain of its emotional contents. Paul exhibits feelings scarcely expected from one whose intellect had already produced Romans, and was yet to bring forth Ephesians and Colossians.
- Acts 20: 16.** The occasion was unique in that they should behold his face no more, but that fact alone did not account for the tender passions surging within the apostle, because he reminds the elders that "by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears." His concern for their spiritual welfare had in other days, as now, caused the fountain of tears to overflow. Most of Paul's emotional moods are transient, but here the spirit continued till his friends "brought him on his way unto the ship."
- Acts 20: 38.**
- Acts 20: 31.**
- Acts 20: 36.**

III.

Passages that illustrate Paul's affectionate disposition are found in all his letters to churches as a whole. To notice several places where this fact prominently appears will serve our purpose.

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he; and the tree is known by its fruits. Then one who could pour into words the passion and poetry 1 Cor. 13. contained in love's perfect hymn was large in his capacity for love. He takes the crown jewel into his hands, turns it over and over and from side to side, viewing from every angle the light and beauty of its facets. And is not this chapter meant by Paul as a revelation of his heart towards the readers and hearers of it? It is surely not an ideal for others, but detached from his own experience. In Second Corinthians, the most personal of Paul's Epistles, we discover the depth and wealth of his tender feelings. "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears . . . that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." 2 Cor. 2: 4. "Ye are in our hearts 2 Cor. 7: 3. to die together and live together," "and I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls." 2 Cor. 12: 15.

If we are disposed to believe Paul insincere or merely indulging in Oriental hyperbole, this would be a good place to rest the charge, for it would be difficult for one to invent stronger professions of love. Intellect in itself knows no such abandon. Thought there is, but thought suffused with tenderness.

The fickleness of the Galatians provoked Paul immeasurably, and he sternly rebuked them for

allowing themselves to be so easily bewitched into apostasy; but the anger "is love enflamed by solicitude for its beloved." Quickly the tempest subsides into the calm of a revived affection: "My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you." Paul's sincerity is proved by the fact that his love was being lavished upon two bodies conspicuous for doctrinal errors and moral obliquities. Such love bears the hall-mark of Calvary's passion.

For obvious reasons Paul's love for the church at Philippi expresses itself in praise for past favors and as ready to sacrifice in future service: "Yea, and if I am poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." The apostle's attitude towards organized bodies reveals "gentleness, tenderness, forbearance, and forgiveness — love's manifold graces."

IV.

Love for his own race burned fadeless and pure as a vestal fire in Paul's heart. Rebuffed in his efforts to win them to Christ, scorned and persecuted by them in every place, the warm current of his soul was not frozen by relentless Jewish opposition. Whatever antipathy appears was doctrinal, not personal. Two notable passages afford ample proof of the apostle's

Gal. 4: 19.

Phil. 2: 17.

abiding affection for his people. "I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh." "Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved." We discover in the words quoted settled grief, a vicarious attitude, and fervent intercession. The language is intense, and at the time it was written, 58 A.D., the Jews had fully shown their hatred of Paul and the gospel. Love that endures rejection and persecution is genuine. Paul's affection for his race was undying, but a minor note is detected here. Love is folding its wounded wings. He is in a measure retiring from unavailing efforts to win them, but they shall know the spirit that still animates him.

Rom. 9: 2, 3.

Rom. 10: 1.

V.

Several general remarks seem fitting as a conclusion of our survey of the emotional aspect of Paul's personality. His conversion transformed his emotional nature. Surging passions that had made havoc of the church were transfused into a wonderful tenderness of heart. Though he was a man of fine self-control, Paul freely showed his feeling at proper times. "In the very midst of his gigantic thoughts and reason-

ings," says Dr. W. L. Watkinson, "spring the sweetest, loveliest bits of heart's-ease that ever greeted weeping eyes or brought fresh hope into despairing souls." Paul's object in appealing to the hearts of people was in order to move them to action in line with truth already presented, to which end knowledge alone is rarely sufficient. At first thought we are surprised at how little Paul says about his love for Christ compared with how much he says about Christ's love for him. But, apart from a natural reserve, the love of Christ to him, the chief of sinners, so overwhelmed him with awe and filled him with gratitude, that Paul did not deem his response in kind as worthy to be mentioned in connection with the glory of that love which passeth all knowledge. His life was a proclamation of his love to Christ. It was the realization of Christ's unmerited love for him that made Paul the great lover of mankind. "His love for all men is the overflow of Christ's love for him," and it was the love of Christ that constrained Paul to make known, wherever possible, the riches of that love to the sons of men. There was nothing effeminate about Paul's affection. He uttered the most scathing condemnations against hypocrisy, apostasy, immorality, and those whom he considered to be enemies of the Cross.



CHAPTER V.
PAUL'S VOLITIONAL LIFE.

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The will is the executive of the personality; and, other faculties being equal, is the decisive factor in determining a career. What Paul achieved in the work of the ministry was due, in the last analysis, to the constitution and direction of his will.

I.

Paul was choosing with reference to Christ all through his life; but we are concerned at this point to note the great choice which marked the beginning of his new life. This choice of Jesus as Messiah and Lord was the fundamental event of his career. His convictions and prejudices were all at first on the side of contemporary Judaism. Jesus, with his seemingly radical claims, appeared in the life of the nation, and many had avowed their faith in him. It is not improbable, in the midst of his frenzied persecution of Christ's followers, that Paul's judgment was in the balance, with all the heavier weight as yet on the side against Jesus. Dr. Garvie thinks the issue between Paul and the Christians had narrowed down to the question

of the resurrection of Jesus. The visual and vocal evidence of that fact, with its amazing accompaniments, as given on the Damascus road, snapped all restraints. Whether the obstacles were few, or many, they were instantly removed. Paul's judgment was convinced, and his choice quickly made. The vision of the historic Jesus of Nazareth, now risen from the dead, was ample evidence that he was the true Messiah. How crowded and significant of the future were the moments! Choosing Jesus as Saviour, him also Paul accepted as Lord: "What shall I do, Lord?" And ever afterwards Paul is constantly designating Christ as Lord. His initial choices promise well for his future Christian life.

1 Cor. 15: 8.
Acts 22: 7.

Acts 22: 10.

II.

In every person of marked decision of character there is a dominant purpose. The will proposes to itself some definite course. Questions are decided by their relation to this aim, and from it the main activities get their sanction. The second step in Paul's volitional life was a simple but strong resolution so to regulate his life as to please Christ. He stated that purpose in his earliest Epistle, "not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts." He doubtless remembered often how much he had

1 Thess. 2: 4.

displeased his Lord in other days, but he steadily adhered to the new intention of his soul. He preferred to be relieved of the struggles and tribulations of this present life, to be at home with Christ in the house not made with hands, but that preference was subordinated to a higher consideration: "We make it our aim whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him." Paul did not pretend to be indifferent to the opinions that men had concerning him, Galatians and Second Corinthians being witnesses. He wanted visible results from his labors; but these things were as small dust in the balance compared with the favorable judgment of Christ: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment . . . but he that judgeth me is the Lord." Paul had the single eye. The high intention of his soul was never deflected by prospects of pain, nor offers of ease or pleasure.

2 Cor. 5: 9.

1 Cor. 4: 3, 4.

Matt. 6: 23.

III.

Next in order of logic and importance after Paul's choice and purpose was his submission to the will of Christ or God. His question, as he lay upon the ground, "What shall I do, Lord?" meant more than a choice of Christ as Lord. It meant also submission. There was

increasing knowledge and understanding of Christ's will, but the key-note of Paul's attitude was struck in that request for directions. The music of his life was harmonious with the spirit of that first question. He began his greatest Epistle not only with his name, but also a title expressive of his relation: "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ," and the phrase is repeated a number of times in other places. Paul was a sincere nature. Cant was to him an impossibility. He never indulged in mock self-depreciation, which, as one has said, is both hypocrisy and egotism. Keeping in mind the nature of the man, we get the full significance of the name he applies to himself. His submission was as unreserved as it was immediate. The final regulative factor in his movements was the will of God. He was happy to be led in bonds at the chariot-wheels of his Conqueror. He wished to bring even every thought into captivity to the will of Christ. When Paul came to the cross-roads, he looked to see which way the divine finger pointed. He would reflect upon circumstances till he was able to read therein the divine will. Such unreserved submission to the authority of another arrests us. Every view of Paul reveals a masterful will, and a pride rooted in genius and nurtured by culture; but he yielded suddenly, absolutely, and

Rom. 1: 1.

Acts 18: 21.

Rom. 1: 10.

2 Cor. 2: 14.

2 Cor. 10: 5.

Acts 16: 6, 7.

permanently the control of his life to Christ. Paul's will was not broken nor absorbed, but sheathed in the will of Jesus. "Christ had taken him, as the sovereign harmony takes the wandering tone." It was a slavery indeed, but that form of slavery which is the best liberty, liberty regulated by perfect Law.

IV.

Paul's submission to Christ issued in efforts for Christ. Somewhat of the extent of his efforts is set down in the chapter on Paul's fields of labor. We note in this division some prominent characteristics of his activity. First of all he was prompt. No Hamlet was he. He was free from that infirmity of will whose "native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Paul was not the dawdling kind. When duty was clear and the time at hand, he was off with the word. Impulse was not permitted to lose its healthy force by delay. "Interval there was none between his apprehension of the Divine purpose," says F. B. Meyer, "and his endeavor to strike his tent and follow wherever it might lead." Promptness is watermarked on every phase of his activity. Converted and admitted into the circle of the disciples at Damascus, "straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus." If men re-

jected his message, as at Antioch in Pisidia, or mocked, as at Athens, he did not haggle with them; he left them for more hopeful material.

He passed rapidly from one city to another. This spirit does not imply unreasoning haste on Paul's part; but, being quick-witted, he discerned the significance of a situation. The time must be redeemed, for the night was coming. And the apostle was as firm as he was prompt in action. On the defensive he steadily maintained the spirituality of the gospel. Paul cared nothing for circumcision as such, but fearing the "false brethren" would make a test case of it, "not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised." Peter drew back from social intercourse with the Gentiles at Antioch, and Paul resisted and rebuked him to the face for such apostasy. Had the council gathered at Jerusalem sided with the men who said, "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved," we can imagine with what vehemence Paul would have repudiated the decision, and with what righteous disdain he would have gone out from them. He was a pacifist, if peace could be had without surrendering something more valuable. Paul was none the less firm in aggressive operations. He persevered in the face of hindrances and

Gal. 2: 3.

Gal. 2: 11f.

Acts 15: 1, 6.

2 Cor. 11: 23-27.

difficulties that would have intimidated and turned back a man made of less heroic stuff. Evil was entrenched in the Gentile world, personal perils were on every hand and of every kind. But these were a challenge to Paul. He sternly held his course against the wind. The Holy Spirit testified that bonds and afflictions awaited him, but none of those things daunted him. He would go on though death was at the end of the road.

Acts 21: 13.

“For where he fixed his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he willed, and bore it
through.”

Paul's efforts were characterized by great energy. His zeal enflamed his abilities, releasing irrepressible tides of energy. He was dynamic. He put his whole self into action. He was like a cavalry charge. He spent himself. He struck with his might. His impact was in full force. This is the impression made on us by a consideration of Paul in any situation.

Acts 13: 10.

As we read his words to-day, we feel their throb. We feel the vigor in his rebuke of the sorcerer at the court of Sergius Paulus: “Thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” And whether he is addressing a synagogue congregation, superstitious pagans,

cultured Athenians, a Jerusalem mob, or rulers and kings, his words tingle with an electric vitality. In writing he is so driven that thoughts crowd upon each other. He piles truth upon truth, like Ossa upon Pelion. He wrote passages that never could be parsed. Leaving one thought incompletely expressed, he leaps to another. He leaves gaps whose content our translations seek to supply by italicized words.

Eph. 2: 1-10.

Eph. 3: 1.

2 Cor. 8: 10-15.

The territory he covered in the comparatively brief period between the beginning of his first missionary journey and his martyrdom in Rome is an abiding witness to Paul's unrelaxing efforts. The record that lies within those dates is unique in history. Think of the ground traversed and cultivated in Asia Minor, the great cities visited in Europe, preaching even as far as Illyricum, and then to Rome, perhaps to Spain, and back into Asia Minor and Greece, and ever on till a martyr's death released him. This achievement was possible only on the theory that his energy so spurred him that he redeemed the time both of night and day, and that he labored more abundantly than all the other apostles. "And what differences preachers one from another, with respect to the total volume of influence that they finally exert, is, I am persuaded," says Dr. W. C. Wilkinson,

Acts 20: 31.
1 Cor. 15: 10.

“as much as any one thing, the original endowment of *energy* which they put into their work.”

V.

The final thing to be considered as to Paul's volitional life is his motives. Motives enter into all actions; so are given treatment in a separate division of this chapter. “No man ever hated his own flesh,” and the gospel of Christ does not impose upon its votaries a philosophy of life wholly contrary to nature. So Paul was moved by a just consideration for his own highest eternal welfare. He was saved by what Christ had done for him, but he was to be rewarded by what he should do, or try to do, for Christ. All work was to be tested and its quality revealed in the great day; and on the firm foundation of Christ, Paul sought to build of lasting material — gold, silver, and costly stones. There were motives also that related specially to Christ. He was not his own; he had been bought with a price; he was Christ's bondservant. Thus was he moved by the duty of obedience to his rightful Master. But Paul's great motive in relation to Christ was gratitude for the love of Christ: “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all . . . and he died for all, that

Eph. 5: 29.

1 Cor. 3: 11-15.

2 Cor. 6: 20.

Phil. 1: 1.

they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." Far above any legal motive both in quality and efficiency was the apostle's gratitude for abounding grace through the Cross. It banked in the current of his intellect, emotions, and will, and was the gravitation that drew the stream restlessly onward. The emphasis of the passage is on the love of Christ for Paul, which awoke in his heart a love to the great Lover.

The moralists of Paul's generation, in his own nation and elsewhere, taught much lofty truth, but their exhortations, lacking the constraining motive of the "mercies of God," were ineffective to produce moral transformation. Paul was also moved by a desire for the present and eternal good of men. He became all things to all men, that he might by all means save some; and his heart's desire and supplication to God was for his kinsmen after the flesh, that they might be saved. Out of Christ men were the bondservants of sin in the present, and in the end their wages would be spiritual death. Knowing therefore the fear of God, and the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, Paul persuaded and besought men to be reconciled to God. This intense desire for the salvation of his fellow-men was a

2 Cor. 5:14,
15.

Rom. 12:1.

1 Cor. 9:22.

Rom. 10:1.

Rom. 6:16.

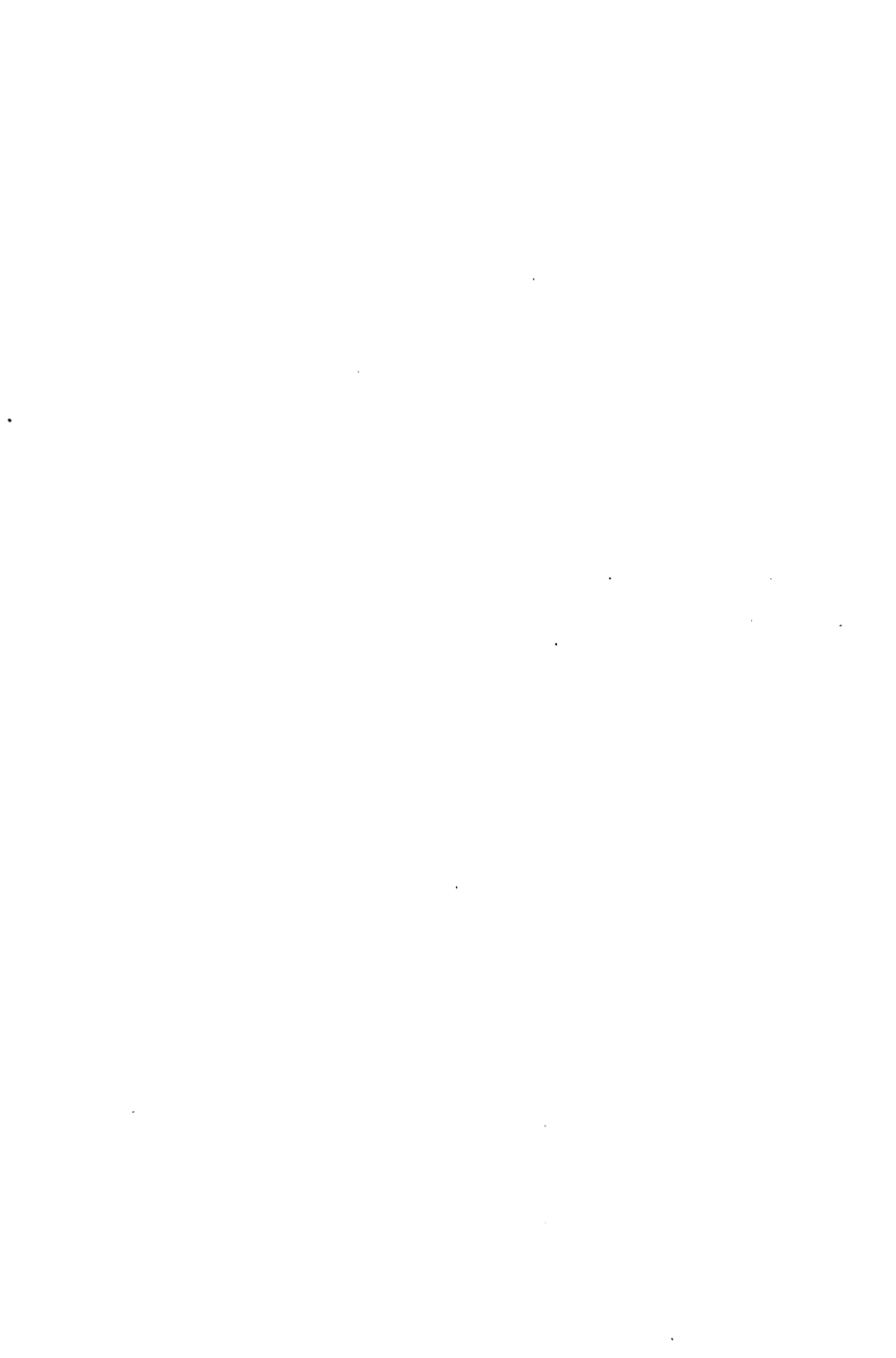
Rom. 6:23.

Rom. 1:18.

2 Cor. 5:20.

gift from Christ to Paul. He was passing on to others what Christ had bestowed upon him. The light of love that shone in his own soul was a reflection of the greater love of Christ. He preached Christ Jesus as Lord, and himself as men's servant for Jesus' sake. The secure basis for an abiding love of humanity is an intense appreciation of the love of Christ towards ourselves.

2 Cor. 4: 8.



CHAPTER VI.
PAUL'S SPIRITUAL LIFE.

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The prominence of the distinctively spiritual element in Paul is obvious and universally recognized. "His mystical union with Christ as God," says Dr. James M. Campbell, "was the central fact in his experience as a Christian man"; and Dr. A. E. Garvie expresses the same conviction in similar language: "What has unfortunately been called his faith-mysticism is the most characteristic feature of his experience." But as mysticism is not a definitely Christian term, is somewhat vague, and misleading in many of its associations, it will not be employed here. This subject brings us into the holy place of Paul's personality.

I.

Consider the fact in several phases. By Paul's spiritual life is meant that portion of the very life of God which was imparted to the apostle's individual spirit. It resulted from his union with "Christ, who is our life." In most cases an adequate translation of Paul's frequent phrase "in Christ" would be *in union with Christ*. He was grafted into the Olive

Col. 3: 4.

Rom. 11: 24.

Tree. There was a passing of divine life into human life. He was one with Christ, as the estuary is one with the sea. This union, vital and real as it was, preserved individuality. The conception defies analysis, but Paul was first of all a "man in Christ" and his "life was hid with Christ in God." He could have said in all sincerity with the Psalmist: "All my fountains are in Thee." Paul realized the mutual communion prayed for by Jesus. His spiritual life began with his conversion. The outward circumstances of that event were so staggering and bewildering that the accounts do not direct attention to the inward transaction, but sufficient information is supplied otherwise. "If any one is in union with Christ," as The Twentieth Century New Testament translates, "he is a new being. His old life has passed away; a new life has begun." By all tokens Paul was from that epochal occasion a new spiritual being and had begun a new spiritual life. God at that time revealed his Son to Paul. Christ connected the convert with the eternal sources, and the well of life evermore was springing up within.

1 Cor. 6: 17.

2 Cor. 12: 2.

Col. 3: 3.

John 17: 21.

2 Cor. 5: 14.

Gal. 1: 16.

II.

Consider some ways in which Paul nourished his spiritual life. He does not take us into the chamber of his inner activities to any great de-

gree. In honorable souls there is always a noble reserve. Private matters are not brought forth to the common gaze. Under normal circumstances, Paul was not a man to talk about himself, nor what he was doing for himself; so "many of the rules by which he was guided can only be learned inferentially." One may preach or write out of his experience without proclaiming the experience itself. What Paul wanted he prayed for. He besought the Lord thrice for the removal of the painful and humbling thorn. He prayed that he might go to Rome; that the Father would grant unto the Ephesians noblest attainments in the spiritual life.

2 Cor. 12: 8.

Rom. 1: 10.

Eph. 3: 14-19.

We are warranted in believing that the counsels of one whose teaching was so largely experiential and whose nature was so sincere were reflections of his own practices. In his earliest Epistle he exhorts the converts to "pray without ceasing"; and one of the duties enjoined upon the church at Rome was to continue "steadfastly in prayer"; and he asked them to pray for him. Surely it is a legitimate inference that Paul prayed constantly and fervently for renewal of supplies of life, for grace to be added unto grace.

1 Thess. 5: 17.

Rom. 12: 12.

Rom. 15: 30-32.

He nourished his spiritual life by right thoughts. He guarded his heart with all diligence against intrusions of evil. His soul was

pre-occupied with sacred engagements. "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on things that are upon the earth." And in writing to the beloved church at Philippi Paul enumerates objects proper for meditation: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things," "for as a man thinketh within himself, so is he," and "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." The divine life will not have fellowship with thoughts that are of the earth, earthy. But in meditating upon things congenial to the mind of Christ human thoughts are quickened and elevated by the impact and transfusion of heavenly grace; and men are in no small measure transformed by the renewing of their minds. It is possible to become the best only by thinking the best. It is the function of the Holy Spirit to reveal, magnify and enthrone the Christ. Paul fed his spiritual life by maintaining conditions that allowed the free operation of that Spirit. He states this negatively: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" by known sins; and "Quench not the Spirit" by resistance to His motions, by refusing to yield to His guidance. One of the stinging rebukes, perhaps the one that fixed

Col. 3: 2.

Phil. 4: 8.

Prov. 23: 7.

Rom. 8: 6.

Rom. 12: 2.

Eph. 4: 30.

1 Thess. 5: 19.

his fate, in Stephen's address before the council was: "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit."

Acts 7: 51.

III.

Consider some results of Paul's spiritual life. It needs to be remarked that no rigid consistency is maintained by the apostle in naming the efficient agency. The work may be viewed as done by grace, Christ, the Spirit, or God Himself. But the essential fact is, that Paul was conscious of a power not of himself, but ultimately of God, producing results within and without his being. Rich and rounded Christian character was, under God, one of the apostle's attainments. He was being transformed into the image of Christ by the operation of the Spirit. All that sun, rain, and fertility are to the earth, that and more was the indwelling life of God to Paul's nature, producing varied but kindred and harmonious fruits: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." Every one in that assemblage of virtues enriched his character; and the soil of his inward being, in which they were rooted, was vitalized by a force not his own.

Phil. 2: 13.

Gal. 5: 22, 23.

Acts 26: 23.

In his spiritual life Paul found unfailing resources for all his own incompetency. He obtained help from God. Indeed, when he was

personally weak, he was most truly strong, for then the power of Christ rested upon him. **2 Cor. 12: 9, 10.** Christ not only gave power to the apostle's powers, but supplemented them. His faculties were revived and reënforced. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" was **Eph. 6: 10.** an exhortation based on constant personal experience. God energized mightily in Paul, **Col. 1: 29.** and made him equal to every demand: "I can **Phil. 4: 13.** do all things in him that strengtheneth me." Paul loved his friends, and their presence and sympathy were comfort and encouragement to him; but when these all forsook him, still "the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me." **1 Tim. 4: 16, 17.** In every crisis grace was supplied in needed measure.

Paul's manifold outward achievements were credited to the operation of the divine life. He did not consider worthy of mention any things save those which Christ wrought through him. **Rom. 15: 18.** He labored more abundantly than all the other apostles; yet, it was not he, but the grace of God which was with him. "I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." **1 Cor. 15: 10.** He **1 Cor. 3: 6.** preached, but success came only because God bore witness to the word of grace. Paul lived in Christ and Christ in Paul; and the co-operation was so perfect that the apostle did not attempt to separate his activities from Christ's, **Gal. 2: 20.**

any more than we would divide the blended waters of a valley stream into its components.

“Who shall draw the mystic line
Severing rightly His from thine,
Which is human, which divine?”

“The deeds which seem most our own,” says Dr. Campbell, “may be the very deeds in which he most fully realizes Himself; so that when we are most conscious of living our own lives, Christ may be most fully living Himself over again in us.” That voices Paul’s idea and experience. Analysis could not relieve the conscious process of mystery or indefiniteness; but Paul knew that from God came the final element of efficiency.

2 Cor. 3: 5.

It was the apostle’s possession of abundant spiritual life that enabled him to minister spiritual life to others, whether that life be conceived in terms of comfort, courage, faith, or love. “I long to see you,” he writes to the church at Rome, “that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.” The idea of giving what has already been received is more fully set forth where he writes of the “God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our afflictions, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves

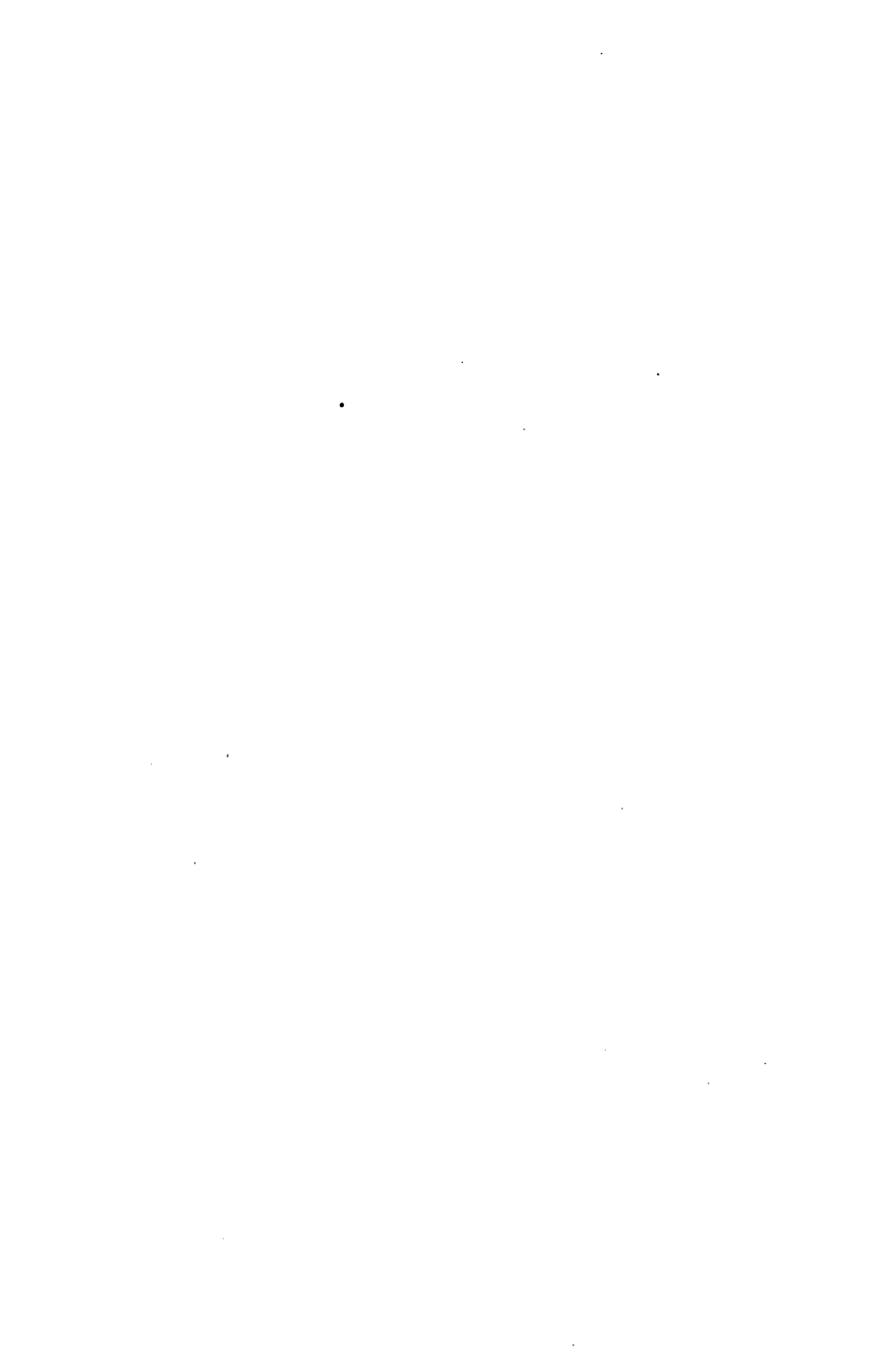
Rom. 1: 11.

2 Cor. 1: 4.

are comforted of God." Faith, hope, and love he could inspire in others because God had first given him a fulness of those virtues.

Dr. Lyman Abbott has given the finest modern interpretation of this phase of Paul's life known to the writer. In "A Birthday Monologue" — having just passed his eightieth anniversary — he states what he regards as the secret of his life: "Whatever I have done for others has first been done for me. If I have solved any one's doubts, it is because these doubts have first confronted me in my search for truth; and the solution which I have found under the guidance of an invisible Teacher I have passed on to others. . . . I have sometimes relighted the torch in the hands of a comrade; but it has always been because the Light-bearer before me had first lighted my torch and bid me pass the light to others. . . . For myself, I would be glad if any one who has ever received help from any word or deed of mine might believe with me that I have not been the giver of life, only the distributor of the life which the Life-giver has given to me."

CHAPTER VII.
PAUL'S MESSAGE.



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PAUL'S MESSAGE.

It has been noted in an earlier chapter of this volume that Paul was given a message from God, which he designates indifferently as the gospel of God, of Jesus, of Christ, or the Lord. It is desired at this point to consider separately some of the main elements composing the one message, and also the apostle's methods of presenting the truth. In order to give unity and progress to the discussion, each part of the message is viewed in its relation to mankind.

I.

Rom. 3: 23.

I. A basic element in Paul's message relates to human sin, which, in his view, was universal; "for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." Paul in Romans shows the sinfulness of Gentiles and Jews separately, and sums up the case by putting both in the same class:

Rom. 3: 9.

"We before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin." The excellence required by the law, whether written as with the Jew, or unwritten as with the Greek, and the higher ideal of the divine character —

the glory of God — had been missed; and “there is none righteous, no not one.” Sin had its origin in the transgression of Adam: “Through one man sin entered the world,” or, more concretely stated, “through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners.” This is introduced primarily neither to prove the universality nor the origin of sin, but as a background upon which to display the universal grace through Christ. Still the statements, though used for comparison, are true. There are not two sources of sin, and the reconciliation of Paul’s seeming to ascribe sin in one case to the “flesh,” and then to Adam’s original transgression is found in the principle of first and second causes. The race had inherited from Adam a depraved nature, for which flesh is a “compendious term,” and from that corrupt soil the evil fruit sprang. In one instance he views the cause in a remote stage and in the other he views it in the immediate stage. It is noticeable that in developing the doctrine of sin in Romans Paul establishes the fact of universal sinfulness, ending this at verse twenty of chapter three, before he refers at all to the Adamic transgression. One effect of human sin was guilt, so that men were viewed as God’s enemies; and, as such, brought under his judgment, and exposed to his wrath; “for the wrath

Rom. 3: 10.

Rom. 5: 12, 19.

Rom. 5: 10.

Rom. 3: 19.

Rom. 1: 18. of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

A second effect of sin was moral bondage, for "to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are." General-

Rom. 6: 16. izing an autobiographical passage, we get Paul's view of the measure of that power. It was the dominant factor in determining conduct; "for the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice."

Rom. 7: 19. The final effect of sin, the consummation of the process, was death; for "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin," and the "wages of sin is death." The first

Rom. 5: 12. passage more likely refers to physical death as a consequence of Adam's sin, and the second

Rom. 6: 23. 2 Thess. 1: 9. means spiritual death, as separation from God's grace and life, since it is contrasted with the "free gift of God" which "is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." In at least two passages

Rom. 6: 23. Paul departs from the ordinary Jewish conception of the divine will as the operating cause, and views death as a natural result of the workings of sin in the soul. "The wages of sin is death," and "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

Gal. 6: 8. But from either point of view death is the penalty of sin, and the penalty is just; for

"they that practice such things are worthy of death."

Rom. 1: 22.

2. Paul's portrayal of sin was preparatory to his message of deliverance from it. "God, the Father, of whom are all things," was the Author of salvation. Salvation is by grace, and God is the source of grace: "it is the gift of God." The divine love was the spring; grace the out-flowing stream. The fact is not usually disconnected from other factors in the process, but God is everywhere set forth as the Originator of salvation. Jesus was the agent of salvation: "one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus," "in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." The method by which saving grace was placed at the disposal of mankind was that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." Christ's sacrifice created spiritual values, which, having no need of them himself, were available for the deficits of others. The method is further and more fully described as a substitution: "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." There was an exchange of desserts; and God in not reckoning unto men their trespasses could be just because Christ had taken the sinner's place, being himself treated as a sinner. Paul once thought that

1 Cor. 3: 6.

Eph. 2: 8.

Rom. 8: 8.

1 Tim. 2: 5.

Col. 1: 14.

1 Cor. 15: 3.

2 Cor. 5: 21.

2 Cor. 5: 19.

Christ was visited with a deserved curse in dying on a tree, but he now saw that thus Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for "cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them."

Gal. 3: 10, 12.

The means for appropriating the wealth made available by the vicarious death of Christ was faith. In Paul's first reported missionary sermon this truth is plainly set forth: "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things." The theme of the Epistle to Romans is: "But the righteous shall live by faith." It is the universally valid means of salvation; for the "Scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

Acts 13: 28, 29.

Rom. 1: 17.

Gal. 3: 22.

One of the chief conflicts of Paul's life and services to Christianity was to keep that doctrine disengaged from entangling alliances with Mosaic ceremonies, which the Judaizers insisted upon as necessary to salvation. He felt bitterly towards those who would pervert the simple way of Christ: "I would that they that unsettle you would even go beyond circumcision." "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be

Gal. 5: 12.

Acts 16: 31.

saved" was the sum of his counsel to those outside the kingdom; and "by grace have ye been saved through faith" was his explanation of the state of those who had been made alive in Christ Jesus. Salvation is complex in the sense that there are several aspects to the one fact, though the several elements do not exist separately. One phase is justification, a judicial act of God by which he declares the sinner just and treats him as if he were righteous. Another phase is adoption, a word borrowed from Roman usage, which is a paternal act by which one already a child is given his rightful position in the divine family. Salvation also includes righteousness. This is a characteristic Pauline term, and is large enough to embrace the ideas both of regeneration — a new creation — and forgiveness. "The view now generally held," says Dr. Garvie, "is that the righteousness of God is the state of pardon and acceptance before God, which is the gift of God's grace and is welcomed by man's faith, and which has been provided by God for mankind in the work of Christ."

Eph. 2: 8.

Rom. 5: 1.

Gal. 4: 5-7.

Gal. 6: 15.

3. Salvation has two sides. One is to be saved from the condemnation of sin, and the other to be saved from the dominion of sin in the life. The latter is sanctification, which is the will of God for men. It is a gradual attain-

1 Thess. 4: 3.

ment, the development of the germ of regeneration, a cleansing from all defilements of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Cor. 7: 1. It is a vital process actually achieving personal godliness, a "being saved" in the sense that more and more of the personality is being reclaimed from the power of sin, that the soul may at last appear without spot or wrinkle or blemish. It is the work of God by the Holy Spirit, using the word of God. "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly" because he "chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit." The Gentiles were "being sanctified by the Holy Spirit," and "we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." Paul does not always distinguish clearly between the presence of Christ and the agency of the Spirit in moral transformation. When he is conscious of an indwelling Person, it is Christ; when of a subtle working power not himself, it is the Spirit. The first work in the process of sanctification was negative: "the repudiation and expulsion of moral evil from the renewed life"; and this was to be followed by the positive operation. The two phases of the one work are nearly always connected in the Scrip-

1 Cor. 1: 18.

Eph. 6: 17.

1 Thess. 5: 23.

2 Thess. 2: 13.

Rom. 15: 16.

2 Cor. 3: 18.

tures. "Put away . . . the old man . . . and put on the new man that after God, hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth," and "seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him." The apostle's words show his eagerness for, and the process of, sanctification. He had not obtained, but he was striving strenuously to attain unto Christ-likeness.

Eph. 5: 22, 24.

Col. 3: 9, 10.

Phil. 3: 12-14.

4. Saved and sanctified character must issue in Christ-like relations to men. "We are so to appropriate Christ as to share his sentiments and aims and ideals and spirit." Men for whose sake Christ died and rose again should no longer live unto themselves; but bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Christ's law of life was love issuing in service, and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Service to humanity is, with proper motive, service to Christ. Paul was the commanding illustration of his own precepts. He was glad to spend and be spent, and happy to be offered in the service and sacrifice of others. He sought not what people had, but them. Ordinary speech must have in view the moral and spiritual welfare of the hearers: "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your

2 Cor. 5: 15.

Gal. 6: 2.

Rom. 8: 9.

2 Cor. 12: 15.

Phil. 2: 17.

1 Cor. 10: 24.

- Eph. 4: 29.** mouth, but such as is good for edifying, as the need may be." Words must impart grace for building up, and be suited to the personal needs of those who hear. The exhortation appears again: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." The quality of conversation should be such as springs naturally from divine grace in the heart, and would thus, as salt, be wholesome and purifying to other lives. Forgiveness in spirit and practice must characterize the followers of the Christ: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you." The forgiven of the Lord must exercise that grace towards any against whom they have complaint as fully and freely as forgiveness was extended to them: "Even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye."
- Col. 4: 6.**
- Eph. 4: 32.**
- Col. 3: 13.**
- Paul quotes approvingly the words of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and liberal giving in a cheerful spirit is urged. He follows his brilliant analogical argument on the resurrection with an appeal for money: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave orders to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye." Rich attainments in other respects should be complemented by abounding in this grace also; not that the recipients might be eased, and the givers distressed, but that
- Acts 20: 35.**
- 2 Cor. 9: 7.**
- 1 Cor. 16: 1.**
- 2 Cor. 8: 7.**

there might be equality; "for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich," and liberality in carnal things is an expression of gratitude for God's unspeakable gift of Christ. 2 Cor. 8: 13, 14.
2 Cor. 8: 9.
2 Cor. 9: 15.

Concessions should be made by those strong in knowledge to those whose consciences are weak: "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ also pleased not himself." It is true that each one shall give account only of himself unto God, but liberties ought to be surrendered; "for if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love." One with the self-denying spirit of Christ will say: "Wherefore if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore." The situation with which the apostle was dealing was local and temporary in nature, but the principle on which his counsel was based is general and valid for all times. Rom. 15: 1-3.
Rom. 14: 13, 15.
1 Cor. 8: 13.

Altruism is to be exalted above egoism: "Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good"; "for he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men." 1 Cor. 10: 24.

Rom. 14: 18.

It is noteworthy that Paul derives sanction for nearly all the main duties of Christians to others from the example of Christ. Thus in urging the spirit of humility, he illustrates it by the sublimest fact on record, the renunciation and humiliation of Christ himself: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant; . . . he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross." So having the Spirit of Christ within them and the example of Christ before them, logically both the disposition and the activities of Christ would be repeated.

Phil. 2: 5-8.

2 Cor. 5: 2.

Phil. 1: 23.

5. A final aspect of Paul's message has to do with what lies beyond the present life. The thought of death was unpleasant to the courageous apostle naturally, but it was the universal lot of man, and he rested confidently in the Christian's hope. It is fairly certain that he did not believe in an intermediate state between death and the general resurrection. To be absent from the body was to be at home with the Lord, and to depart was to be with Christ. There is no room in these clear statements for an indefinite period of semi-unconsciousness or nebulous spiritual condition. He thought of

his freed spirit as at once being ushered into the presence of his Saviour, which was far better. Paul was sure of due recognition and reward when he should have "crossed the bar." Unshadowed confidence is mingled with the subduing pathos of his swan-song: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day." The apostle had often seen awarded to the successful competitor in the Greek national games a victor's garland, and saw in that earthy fact a heavenly truth — his own reward in nobler kind. "Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." The reward is in recognition of victory won over sin, which is righteousness: a righteousness on one hand bestowed through Christ, and on the other hand acquired by the inward operations of the divine Spirit. And that unfading crown was not for him only, but for all them that have loved Christ's appearing. 2 Tim. 4: 7.
1 Cor. 9: 25.

Paul was assured of the resurrection of the body after the fashion of Christ's resurrection. His vigorous and confident assertions to those who questioned the fact or were puzzled as to the manner, reveal his own faith. "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the *first-*

fruits of them that are asleep," or, as more fully stated: "But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's at his coming." Identity will be preserved. There will be continuity in spite of the transformation; for "we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Change he recognizes by his illustration: "God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own," but this is not inconsistent with substantial identity. As Paul thought of his approaching disembodiment, he longed for incarnation in that nobler habitation for his spirit: "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." The building from God here spoken of clearly means the glorified unchanging resurrection body in contrast to the unending natural body in which for the present his spirit was housed. We do not need the eloquent passage to assure us that heaven was to Paul a place. Where Christ had gone in his glorified state was heaven to his great apostle, and there he would find fulness of joy for evermore.

1 Cor. 15:20, 23.

1 Cor. 15:52, 53.

1 Cor. 15:38.

2 Cor. 5:1.

II.

Having a sure message, the next important matter is so to deliver it that it shall not fail of its purpose. Paul's characteristics in this regard are outstanding; and his written as well as his spoken words illustrate his spirit. There is both reason and scholarly authority for regarding his Epistles as sermons to be read.

1. Paul was exceedingly tactful and courteous in presenting his message. These two qualities have enough elements common to be considered together. One sees in his manner not only the flexibility of his mind, but also the graciousness of his heart. He varies his salutations to conform to local customs. Jews and their sympathizers are saluted as "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God"; the pagans of Lystra as "Sirs"; and the Athenians in true classical style as "Ye men of Athens," which from time immemorial had been the formula in use by Athenian orators. The Jews who would destroy him without mercy are saluted as "Brethren and fathers," and Paul was generous enough to recognize that their anger against him was prompted by religious sincerity: "Being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day." As he proceeds in the address, he weaves in the information that Ananias who at

Acts 13: 16.

Acts 14: 16.

Acts 17: 22.

Acts 22: 1.

Acts 22: 3.

the beginning had been his patron, was a "devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt" at Damascus. At Athens he perceives that his hearers are a very religious people, at the proper moment sustains his position by quoting one of their poets, and throughout his speech reasons in a manner congenial to the Greek intellect.

Paul was full of generous sentiments, and had a talent for dispensing praise when deserved. A fresh glance over his Epistles shows that in nearly every instance he first expresses cordial appreciation of all worthy characteristics. He must say some severe things to the Corinthian church, but he first thanks God for their enrichment in grace, utterance, knowledge, and gifts. In those several letters where he does not bestow a compliment, either conditions plainly did not justify it, or, as with the pastoral letters, there was no need of formalities.

In no instance does Paul's native courtesy show to better advantage than in his appearance before Agrippa. He abhorred the character of the man; but he recognizes the official, and his deportment is dignified and courtly. Crediting the king with expertness "in all customs and questions which are among the Jews," Paul counts himself fortunate to make his defence before a capable judge. There is win-

1 Cor. 1: 4-7.

Acts 26: 2-3.

someness in the spirit and in the tone of the speaker's voice. It is clear that the apostle's tact and courtesy never deserted him unless the stern resentment of ill use before the Council be an exception. It is hard to see that courtesy was in order there. Acts 23: 3-8.

Paul was a man of spirit, and restraint under intolerable circumstances is neither possible nor desirable. No more perfect a gentleman has ever adorned Christianity than the great apostle. His was a patrician nature that revealed itself in manner and becoming conduct on every occasion. There was with him always a fine considerateness for other people, and this is the very soul of courtesy, the flower of good breeding; and we rise to a noble level of spirit as we contemplate the qualities of this true Christian gentleman.

2. Paul was faithful in delivering his message. He was a steward of the mysteries of God, and "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." He had been long enough in the field for his fidelity in this regard to be tested, when he declared: "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God." His testimony had been both 1 Cor. 4: 2.

- Acts 26: 19-22.** to small and great. The records fully corroborate this account of his stewardship. Most diligent employment of time made possible such a report. But there is another aspect to the quality of fidelity. Paul had not only carried the message widely, but had also delivered it in its wholeness. The spirit of his ministry is set forth in his words to the elders of Ephesus: "I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." He did not pare off the severe phases of the message. He did not water to weakness the heroic medicine of the gospel. It is not in evidence that Paul ever modified or qualified the facts and requirements of the truth. The Jews were pointed beyond the law to Christ as their only hope, and he shocked their complacency by classing them with the Gentiles in moral failures, and in the method of salvation, and faithfully warned them of the danger of rejecting the truth. Dignitaries neither abashed nor daunted him. Rather was he diligent to redeem the opportunity their presence presented. Neither fear nor hope of favor constrained Paul to blunt the edge of the weapon he was given to wield. So pointedly did he reason of "righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come," that Felix was terrified; and though the apostle's words to Agrippa were complimentary, the king
- Acts 20: 27.**
- Acts 13: 39**
- Rom. 2: 1.**
Rom. 3: 20.
Acts 28: 25-27.
- Acts 24: 25.**

saw that they were aimed at making him a Christian.

Acts 26: 23.

Never to compromise the truth under any circumstances required courage, but Paul was one who never feared the face of man where the right was involved. He was animated by a great purpose to fulfil his commission, to open people's eyes, turn their hearts from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that were sanctified by faith in Christ; and thus actuated he shrank not from declaring anything that was profitable, publicly and from house to house, to Jews and Gentiles, night and day.

Acts 26: 18.

Acts 20: 20, 31.

CHAPTER VIII.
PAUL'S FIELDS OF LABOR.

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The sphere of Paul's ministry was of course determined in a general way by his commission as given first through Ananias in Damascus, repeated by Jesus in the temple, and started into execution by command from the Holy Spirit in Syrian Antioch; but inside of that broad delimitation, there were reasons for his choosing particular localities, for remaining in them a longer or shorter time, and for changing to other places.

I.

Acts 9: 20, 29. I. In the first stage of his ministry, before he had found the open road, Paul struck in where he happened to be, as at Damascus and Jerusalem; but more definite considerations governed him after that period. In some cases his choice was based on direct personal appeal. Barnabas, a wise and spiritually-minded man, discovering a unique situation at Syrian Antioch, "went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch." Barnabas was indeed the ambassador of Christ, though an un-

official one, in that mission; but to draw with the cords of a man and the bands of love is the Lord's method, and Paul interpreted the appeal as the will of God. The clearness and simplicity of the incident make it instructive. It should be of much practical value to remember that the immediate cause of Paul's going to the great strategic center of Syria was the influence of a trusted friend.

On his second missionary journey, Paul was "forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" and also Bithynia; but he was debarred from those regions, that he might be turned to Troas, where "a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." This case is not quite so clear as the one noted above, but having elements in common, the two are classed under one head. We are not required to identify the man of Macedonia, or to say whether he was natural or supernatural. The point is, that after reflection upon the words of another, Paul concluded that God had called him to preach the gospel in Europe.

Acts 16: 6, 7.

Acts 16: 9.

Acts 16: 10.

2. Acting for most part on his own enlightened judgment in the choice of fields, Paul selected the cities for his main operations. This, on one hand, satisfied the ambition of his

2 Cor. 10: 16.

strongly independent character to do pioneer work, so as "not to glory in another's province in regard of things ready to our hand," but "making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation." And in view of his energy, courage, and clear vision of the gospel's independence of tradition and Jewish ceremonies, working on new ground was expedient as well as personally satisfying to the apostle. The probability of friction was lessened. And, on the other hand, choosing the great centers enabled Paul to exert the largest influence in a given period.

On the personal side his life and training qualified him for more efficient service in the cities. And conditions obtaining there created greater opportunities. In the first place he could reach more people by direct public appeal, and those reached would scatter the word to other regions, as did the multitudes returning to their homes after the day of Pentecost. For example, truth sown upon the changing currents of life in Corinth was not only salt to local corruption, but through the city's commercial connections was borne far and wide, east and west. And, then, in the great cities large colonies of Jews were found. It was reasonable to expect that they, whose had been

the preparation, would more readily embrace the gospel, and thereafter be his true yoke-fellows in the arduous work of disseminating the truth. Both for their sake and the gospel's Paul proclaimed first in every place to Jews and others that feared God the fulfilment in Jesus Christ "of the promise made unto the fathers," and "in a great many instances the Jews of the Dispersion were the nucleus of the churches outside of Palestine." **Acts 13: 22.**

The influential men of the day were in the cities. Dr. Maurice Jones notes that Paul was anxious to present the gospel to the great men of the world. In Cyprus he eagerly embraced the opportunity to preach earnestly to the pro-consul, Sergius Paulus. In the riot in Ephesus it developed that certain Asiarchs, men of importance, were his friends. Erastus was treasurer of Corinth, and Gaius evidently a man of consequence. In Cæsarea Paul found opportunity to preach to Felix, Festus, and Herod Agrippa. His first care in Rome was to call "together the chief of the Jews." The wise, the mighty, and the noble might not be effectually called in great numbers; but as he had opportunity, Paul urged upon them the claims of the gospel, and his efforts were by no means fruitless. **Acts 13: 7.**
Acts 19: 31.
Rom. 16: 23.
Acts 24: 25;
26: 1.
Acts 26: 17.

II.

The apparent reason for Paul's remaining in selected localities for a longer or shorter period was success or prospects of success. In spite of the alienation of the Jews, he tarried at Antioch of Pisidia until the "word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region." At Iconium a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed. "Long time therefore they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace." At Corinth, in addition to success already achieved, the Lord promised Paul other victories. So "he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." On his first visit to Ephesus the apostle was unable to abide long, but on his return his ministry "continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." Like all earnest preachers, Paul wanted results, and while the harvest yielded to his hand, he did not grow weary in well-doing. Argument from silence is unsafe, but, while the work prospered or the worker was unmolested, it seems that his staying was not dependent upon special manifestations or commands of the Lord. Paul loved to plant, but also to nurture the new life into vigorous growth.

Acts 13: 49.

Acts 14: 3.

Acts 18: 11.

Acts 19: 20.

He was primarily an evangelist, but where conditions allowed he sought, by remaining or returning, to establish the converts in the faith.

III.

I. Paul frequently changed his field of labor, but the sheer novelty of the experience was not his motive. The chief cause of his removals was the activity of enemies. From his first attempts to preach in Damascus till after the silversmith's riot in Ephesus, this cause was operative. Its first form was usually opposition to his message on the part of the Jews. This was not sufficient to drive Paul from the vicinity, but he sought a different audience in the same city or community. His pulpit was transferred from the synagogue to some public or private place. "Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles," he said to the jealous Jews at Pisidian Antioch; and to a crowd similarly disposed in Corinth, "From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles," and at Ephesus "when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them," going into the school of Tyrannus. Acts 13: 46.

Opposition to the character of the message soon developed into hostility to Paul himself. Acts 18: 6.

Acts 19: 9.

Unable to stand against him in the arena of intellectual combat, his enemies resorted to physical weapons. At Antioch and Iconium the Jews secured the aid of the civil authorities, and made similar efforts at Thessalonica and Corinth. At Lystra and Berœa the townspeople were won over and used as tools by the implacable Jews. At Philippi his persecutors were the masters of the fortune-telling girl, and at Ephesus the silversmith Demetrius and craftsmen of like occupation, exciting the multitudes. Paul was courageous, but not reckless. He knew when he was not wanted.

2. But not all Paul's changes were forced. In general he was an itinerant. God was making manifest through him the savor of divine knowledge in every place, and there was much land to be possessed in the name of the King. Some of his significant movements were entirely voluntary. The attitude of Gallio at Corinth, for example, recognized Paul's right to preach the gospel under the Roman law. "And Paul, having tarried after this many days, took his leave of the brethren." And on his first visit to Ephesus, the Jews themselves desired "him to abide a longer time," but consenting not he set sail for Cæsarea. On his third journey he moved freely through Macedonia, and at Troas "tarried seven days." He

Acts 13: 50.

Acts 14: 5.

Acts 17: 6.

Acts 14: 19.

Acts 17: 13.

Acts 16: 19.

Acts 19: 23-29.

Acts 18: 15, 16.

Acts 13: 13.

Acts 18: 20.

Acts 20: 2, 6.

